



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**CYTOTOXICITY OF MAHANIMBINE, MURRYAFOLINE A AND  
S-BENZYLDITHIOCARBAZATE ON HUMAN LEUKEMIC CELL LINE,  
CEM-SS**

**KOK YIH YIH**

**FSMB 2001 5**

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BENZYL DITHIOCARBAZATE ON HUMAN LEUKEMIC CELL LINE,  
CEM-SS**

**By**

**KOK YIH YIH**

**Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the  
Degree of Master Science in the Faculty of Food Science and Biotechnology  
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

**December 2001**



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**Faculty: Food Science and Biotechnology**

Mahanimbine, a carbazole alkaloid was isolated from an ether extract of the stem bark of *Murraya koenigii* whilst Murrayafoline A was isolated from petroleum ether extract of the roots of *Murraya koenigii*. S-Benzylidithiocarbazate is a dithiocarbazic acid Schiff base derived from S-alkyl esters. They were found to exhibit cytotoxic activity against CEM-SS human T-lymphoblastic leukemic cells. The cytotoxic activity of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate that inhibit 50 % growth ( $IC_{50}$ ) of CEM-SS were 6  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , 5  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 7.5  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  respectively. For comparative purposes, the  $IC_{50}$  of several commercial cytotoxic drugs against CEM-SS were determined. The inhibition effect of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate were better than Methotrexate ( $IC_{50} > 30 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ), Doxorubicine ( $IC_{50} = 21 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ), Cytarabine ( $IC_{50} > 30 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ) and Colchecine ( $IC_{50} = 8 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ).

These compounds were found to be less active than cis-diamine dichloroplatinum and Vinorelbine tartrate with a  $IC_{50}$  value of 3  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ . In contrast, these three compounds were found to be less active against normal mouse fibroblasts cell, 3T3 with the  $IC_{50}$  value of 11  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  (Mahanimbine), 17  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  (Murrayafoline A) and 10  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  (*S*-Benzyldithiocarbazate) respectively. The study showed that the proliferation of cells was inhibited before the cells were being killed. In addition, Mahanimbine, MurrayafolineA and *S*-Benzyldithiocarbazate caused programmed cell death by showing apoptotic features such as nucleus fragmentation, cell shrinkage, membrane blebbing and formation of apoptotic bodies. These were further confirmed with DNA laddering in agarose gel electrophoresis assay due to DNA fragmentation. DNA laddering was obtained after 24 hours of treatment by these three compounds in a dose-independent but time-dependent way. Mahanimbine and Murrayafoline A were shown to arrest CEM-SS cells at  $G_1$  phase of cell cycle using flowcytometry method. As a result, Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and *S*-Benzyldithiocarbazate were found as potent antitumor agents.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**SITOTOKSIK SITI MAHANIMBINE, MURRAYAFOLINE A AND S-BENZYL DITHIOCARBAZATE KE ATAS JUJUKAN SEL LEUKEMIA MANUSIA, CEM-SS**

Oleh

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Mahanimbine, sejenis karbazole alkaloid yang diasingkan dari ekstrak eter daripada batang kulit kayu *Murraya koenigii* manakala Murrayafoline A diasingkan dari ekstrak petroleum eter daripada akar *Murraya koenigii*. S-Benzyl dithiocarbazate pula adalah asid dithiocarbazik Schiff bas yang dihasil daripada ester S-alkyl. Mereka didapati menunjukkan aktiviti sitotoksik ke atas jujukan sel T-lymphoblastik leukemia manusia, CEM-SS. Aktiviti sitotoksik Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A dan S-Benzyl dithiocarbazate yang dapat merencatkan pertumbuhan sel CEM-SS sebanyak 50 peratus ( $IC_{50}$ ) adalah 6  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , 5  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 7.5  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  masing-masing. Untuk tujuan perbandingan,  $IC_{50}$  bagi beberapa jenis dadah sitotoksik komersial ke atas CEM-SS juga ditentukan. Kesan perencatan Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzyl dithiocarbazate adalah lebih baik daripada Methotrexate ( $IC_{50} > 30 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ),

Doxorubicine ( $IC_{50} = 21 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ), Cytarabine ( $IC_{50} > 30 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ) dan Colchicine ( $IC_{50} = 8 \mu\text{g/ml}$ ). Sebatian-sebatian ini adalah kurang aktif berbanding dengan cis-diamine dichloroplatinum dan Vinorelbine tartrate dengan nilai  $IC_{50} 8 \mu\text{g/ml}$ . Sebaliknya, ketiga-tiga sebatian ini didapati kurang aktif ke atas jujukan sel fibroblast tikus yang normal, 3T3 dengan nilai  $IC_{50} 11 \mu\text{g/ml}$  (Mahanimbine),  $17 \mu\text{g/ml}$  (Murrayafoline A) dan  $10 \mu\text{g/ml}$  (*S*-Benzyldithiocarbazate) masing-masing. Kajian ini telah menunjukkan bahawa pertumbuhan sel-sel akan direncatkan sebelum mereka terbunuh. Tambahan lagi, Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A dan *S*-Benzyldithiocarbazate mengarahkan kematian sel terprogram dengan menunjukkan sifat apoptotik seperti penyerpihan nukleus, pengecutan sel, membran membengkak dan pembentukan badan apoptotik. Penentuan secara lebih lanjut telah ditunjukkan dengan pembentukan “tangga DNA” dalam elektrophoresis gel agarose terhasil dari penyerpihan DNA. Tangga DNA didapati selepas rawatan 24 jam oleh ketiga-tiga sebatian secara bergantung kepada masa rawatan dan bukan dos. Mahanimbine and Murrayafoline A dapat menahan CEM-SS sel pada fasa  $G_1$  dengan menggunakan flowsitometri. Justeru itu, Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A dan *S*-Benzyldithiocarbazate didapati berpotensi sebagai agen antibarah.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Glory and praise be to the God, the Almighty for providing me the strength and diligence to complete this dissertation despite several obstacles encountered throughout the progress of this study, which at times seemed insurmountable.

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Abdul Manaf Ali for his guidance, concern, understanding, moral and financial supports.

I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Md. Tofazzal Hossain Tarafder and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd. Aspollah B. Hj. Sukari for their valuable guidance as well as providing me the compounds and Dr. Yazid for his kindness and willingness to help.

I am under obligation to all students of the Animal Tissue Culture Laboratory especially Tony Chai, Yang Mooi, Boon Keat, Khor, Shuhaimi, Shakira, Maddie, Majid, Kak Siti and Kak Niza.

Last but not least, to my beloved late father, mother, brothers and friends, thank you for being supportive throughout my student life spent in UPM.

I certify that an Examination Committee met on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2001 to conduct the final examination of Kok Yih Yih on her Master Science thesis entitled “Cytotoxicity of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate on Human Leukemic Cell Line, CEM-SS” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



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KOK YIH YIH

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2001

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
ABSTRACT	ii
ABSTRAK	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
APPROVAL	vii
DECLARATION	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
 <b>CHAPTER</b>	
 1 INTRODUCTION	 1
 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Traditional Medicine	4
2.2 Family Rutaceae	5
2.2.1 Genus <i>Murraya</i>	5
2.2.2 <i>Murraya koenigii</i> and the uses	6
2.3 Cancer	7
2.3.1 The Biology of Cancer	7
2.3.2 Classification of tumors	8
2.3.3 The Genetics of cancer	8
2.3.4 Mutation and Carcinogenesis	10
2.3.5 Oncogenes	12
2.3.6 Tumor Suppressor Genes	19
2.4 Terminology of Cell Death	25
2.5 Apoptosis	26
2.5.1 Definition	26
2.5.2 The Morphology of Apoptosis	28
2.5.3 Functions of Programmed Cell Death	29
2.5.4 Apoptosis Produced by Other Forms of injury	31
2.5.5 Causes of Interest in Apoptosis	32
2.5.6 Apoptosis and Tumorigenesis	33
2.5.7 Biochemistry of Apoptosis	35
2.5.8 Signaling for Apoptosis	38
2.6 Apoptosis and Cancer Therapy	42
 3 METHODOLOGY	 44
3.1 Compounds	44
3.2 Cell Lines Maintenance	46
3.3 Microtitration Cytotoxicity Assay	47
3.4 Morphology Assessment	48

	3.4.1 Phase Contrast Microscopy	48
	3.4.2 Fluorescent Microscopy (Acridine Orange and Propidium Iodide Staining)	49
	3.4.3 Electron Microscopy	49
3.5	DNA Fragmentation Assay	54
3.6	DNA Cell Cycle Analysis Using Flowcytometry	55
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	56
4.1	Cytotoxicity of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate	56
4.2	Cell Viability	64
4.3	Morphological Assessment of Apoptosis	
	4.3.1 Phase Contrast Microscopy	72
	4.3.2 Fluorescence Microscopy (Acridine Orange and Propidium Iodide)	77
	4.3.3 Electron Microscopy	92
4.4	DNA Fragmentation Assay	107
4.5	DNA Cell Cycle Analysis	111
5	CONCLUSION	128
	REFERENCES	131
	VITA	149

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Genetic regulators of apoptosis	9
2	Proto-oncogenes and Human tumors: some consistent incriminations	14
3	Tumor-suppressor gene	20
4	Differential features and significance of necrosis and apoptosis	27
5	Protease suggested to be involved in apoptosis and their possible substrates	36
6	Two-fold dilution gradient	48
7	The inhibition concentration of 50% ( $IC_{50}$ ) of various standard cytotoxic compounds against CEM-SS cells determined by using MTT assay	62

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	One of a variety of possible sequences of genetic changes in a cell lineage that can lead to the development of colon cancer	12
2	Chemical structure of Mahanimbine	45
3	Chemical structure of Murrayafoline A	45
4	Chemical structure of <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate	46
5	Flow chart of specimen preparation for scanning electron microscopy	51
6	Flow chart of specimen preparation for transmission electron microscopy	53
7	Percentage viability of CEM-SS cells after treated with Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate	57
8	Percentage viability of HT29 cells after treated with Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate	58
9	Percentage viability of MCF 7 cells after treated with Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate	59
10	Percentage viability of HeLa cells after treated with Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate	60
11	Percentage viability of 3T3 cells after treated with Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate	61
12	The effect of Mahanimbine on total cell number compared with untreated cell.	66
13	The effect of Murrayafoline A on total cell number compared with untreated cell.	67
14	The effect of <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate on total cell number compared with untreated cell.	68
15	The effect of Mahanimbine on CEM-SS cell viability number compared with untreated cell.	69
16	The effect of Murrayafoline A on CEM-SS cell viability number compared with untreated cell.	70
17	The effect of <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate on CEM-SS cell viability number compared with untreated cell.	71
18	Phase contrast microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	73
19	Phase contrast microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	74
20	Phase contrast microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	75
21	Phase contrast microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	76
22	Fluorescence microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	79
23	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population of non-treated cells at various time courses	82
24	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 30 µg/ml of Mahanimbine at various time courses	83

25	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 6 µg/ml of Mahanimbine at various time courses	84
26	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 3.25 µg/ml of Mahanimbine at various time courses	85
27	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 30 µg/ml of Murrayafoline A at various time courses	86
28	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 5 µg/ml of Murrayafoline A at various time courses	87
29	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 3.25 µg/ml of Murrayafoline A at various time courses	88
30	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 30 µg/ml of Mahanimbine at various time courses	89
31	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 7.5 µg/ml of Mahanimbine at various time courses	90
32	The percentage of viable, apoptotic and necrotic CEM-SS cells in the population after treated with 3.25 µg/ml of Mahanimbine at various time courses	91
33	Scanning electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	94
34	Scanning electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	95
35	Scanning electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	96
36	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	100
37	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	101
38	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	102
39	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	103
40	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	104
41	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	105
42	Transmission electron microscopy examination of CEM-SS cells	106
43	Effect of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate on DNA fragmentation	109
44	Effect of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate on DNA fragmentation	110
45	The percentage of apoptotic cells in the population treated with Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and S-Benzylidithiocarbazate at different concentration	114
46	DNA fluorescence histograms of PI stained CEM-SS cells in FL2H	116
47	DNA fluorescence histograms of PI stained CEM-SS cells in FL2H	117
48	DNA fluorescence histograms of PI stained CEM-SS cells in FL2H	118

49	Cell cycle analysis of Mahanimbine and Murrayafoline A-treated CEM-SS cell population using flow-cytometer	120
50	Cell cycle analysis of Mahanimbine and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate-treated CEM-SS cell population using flow-cytometer	121
51	Cell cycle analysis of Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate-treated CEM-SS cell population using flow-cytometer	122
52	Cell cycle analysis of Mahamibine-treated CEM-SS cell population using flow-cytometer	123
53	Cell cycle analysis of Murrayafoline A and <i>S</i> -Benzyldithiocarbazate-treated CEM-SS cell population using flow-cytometer	124



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

%	percentage
AO	acridine orange
ATCC	American Type Culture Collection
bp	base pairs
EDTA	Ethylenediamine Tetraacetic Acid
IC <sub>50</sub>	Inhibition concentration at 50%
IR	Infra-red
mg	milligram
ml	milliliter
mM	millimolar
MTT	3-(4, 5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2, 5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide
nm	nanometer
O.D.	Optical Density
OsO <sub>4</sub>	osmium tetroxide
PBS	phosphate buffered saline
PI	propidium iodide
rpm	rotation per minute
SEM	scanning electron microscope
TEM	transmission electron microscope
UV	ultraviolet
μg	microgram

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cancer is now the public's most feared disease. The global incidence of cancer is soaring due to rapidly aging populations in most countries. Over the next 25 years there will be a dramatic increase in the number of people developing cancer. Globally, 10 million new cancer patients are diagnosed each year and this will surge to 20 million by the year 2020 (Sikora, 1999). American Cancer Society reported that since 1990, approximately 12 million new cancer cases have been diagnosed. In the states, about 1,268,100 Americans are expected to die of cancer in the year of 2001- more than 3000 people a day. This increment is fuelled in part by the globalization of unhealthy lifestyles. Billions of dollars are spent annually, on cancer research by the drug industry, but a cure for cancer appears illusive.

Comprehensive articles on areas as wide-ranging as chemoprevention, cancer genetics and human cancer therapy have stimulated great interest. An understanding of the varied mechanisms leading to cancer has favored the development of many new cancer therapies, most notably perhaps the emergence of curative cytotoxic drug treatments of some previously uniformly fatal forms of cancers. Dramatic technological change is likely in surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy to increase cure rates, but at a price.

Decades of modern treatments have taught us that cancer is a “smart” disease and surgery has become conservative due to technological improvements. Therefore, the role of chemotherapy has become more defined to beat “smart” cancer cells via smarter therapies. This is a considerable challenge. It is matched, however by the real sense of excitement that has developed in the field of new anticancer drug discovery (Baring, 1997). This excitement is based on the premise that we can design much smarter and more effective therapies by aiming to counteract or exploit the very genetic and biochemical abnormalities that drive the disease itself (Workman, 1994). The treatments of the next century will be rationally designed, less toxic and more effective.

The third millenium is upon us and achievements in cancer research had reached to a stage where tremendous technological advances for cancer are available to millions of patients suffering from and succumbing to unconquered neoplastic diseases. Besides that, there is enormous potential for the discovery of innovative cancer drugs with improved efficacy and selectivity for this millenium. The world is in a health transition and cancer drug discovery is re-inventing itself, in order to exploit the latest intellectual technological developments. Hopefully in the next 25 years, will be a time of unprecedented change in the way in which we will control cancer.

There are four major phases in drug discovery, target identification and validation, lead identification, lead optimization and clinical drug candidate and in this study, the very early stage of drug discovery was being emphasized. Two natural products Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A isolated from *Murraya koenigii* (curry leaf)

whose leaves are widely used in local cooking and a synthetic compound *S*-Benzylidithiocarbazate were being approached and studied in order to discover their enormous potential as chemotherapeutic drugs on T-lymphoblastic leukemia.

The objectives of this study are:

- i) to determine the cytotoxicity of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and *S*-Benzylidithiocarbazate on human T-lymphoblastic leukemic, CEM-SS cell.
- ii) To study the effect of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and *S*-Benzylidithiocarbazate on CEM-SS cells in terms of proliferation, morphological changes and the mode of cell death induced by the compounds.
- iii) To identify the mode of action of Mahanimbine, Murrayafoline A and *S*-Benzylidithiocarbazate.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Traditional Medicine**

Traditional medicine using herbal exists in every part of the world. In the history of medicine, the necessity of helping sick people goes back to the origin of mankind. In many places of the world special ways of medical treatment were found. By looking back into history, we found that nearly all cultures from ancient times until the present day have been using plants as a source for medicine. Generally, we can distinguish three major areas of traditional medicine: Chinese, Indian and European and the art of practicing herbal medicine stretches back over more than thousand of years (Vogel, 1991). However, there are a few basic difficulties that traditional medicine not accepted worldwide. The Health Authorities of this individual country mostly accept the experiences gathered in one cultural area but not by another Health Authority elsewhere. Another basic difficulty is the fact that traditional medicine usually consists of many herbal or animal or inorganic ingredients. There is a wide variation in the quantity of pharmacological active substances in each plant. Differences in methods of extraction and purification influence the results. Besides that, it is quite often traditional recipes lacked of sufficient quality control and drug standardization. (Vogel, 1991). Therefore, it's important to internationalize some standardize extracts from these herbal drugs by going through a required developing procedures from Health Authority.

## 2.2 Family Rutaceae

This family comprises trees, shrubs and climbers recognized from their resinous, lime-like smell of the broken twigs, fruits or of the crushed leaves. Many essential oils such as citronella and bergamot are extracted by distillation from plants of this family and mostly of these oils are used in native medicine (Kirthika and Basu, 1935).

This family consists of 161 genera and 1700 species throughout the world and found mostly in warm countries (Mabberly, 1987). In Malaysia, there are 16 genera and 50 species and mostly are found in lowland area.

### 2.2.1 Genus *Murraya*

Genus *Murraya* is from Angiosperma's division, Dycotilidon's Class, Sepindales's order, Rutaceae's (Lemon) family (Heywood, 1979) and Aurantiodea's subfamili. Genus *Murraya* was named after John Andrew Murray (1740-1791), a Sweedish botanist. Among the seven species from this genus, only *Murraya paniculata* has aromatic flowers (Huxley, 1992). *Murraya koenigii* (curry leaf) is one of the most widely used plants whose leaves are added to curries to improves flavor. It is usually cultivated for its aromatic smell, which are used as natural flavorings in curries and sources (Sastri, 1952).

Various parts of *M. koenigii* have many medicinal uses and values as raw material for traditional medicine and popular in India (Kirthikar and basu, 1935). It have been

reported that the leaves and the roots can cure piles and heat removal of the body, inflammation and itching, while the powdered leaf is used to aid healing of fresh cuts. The green leaves could be eaten raw for the treatment of dysentery (Drury, 1978). Barks and roots are used to relieve skin eruptions and bites by poisonous animals (Dasturs, 1970). Currently, this plant has been used in the industry, where fresh leaves are steam distilled under reduced pressure to yield volatile oils (curry leaf oil) which can be used as a fixative for a heavy type of soap perfume (Joseph *et al.*, 1985). Biological activities of Malaysia plants were first reported by Nakashini *et al.* in 1965. *Murraya koenigii* has been proven to be a rich source of carbazole alkaloids. Isolation work on the stem bark carried out by Reish *et al.* 1994 gave a new non-cyclized compound that postulated as biogenetic precursors of mahanimbine.

### **2.2.2 *Murraya koenigii* and its uses**

*Murraya koenigii* is a member of the large Rutaceae family and represented by about 161 genera and 1700 species. In Malaysia, nearly 60 species of this family can be found including two species of *Murraya*: namely *M. koenigii* and *M. paniculata*.

*M. koenigii* (curry leaf) is one of the most widely used plants whose leaves are added to curries to improve flavour. This intensive pungent, aromatic leaves are best when fresh, but adequately retain their potency for some time after picking.

## **2.3 Cancer**

Cancer is a genetic disease, because it can be traced to alterations within specific genes, but in most cases, it is not an inherited disease. The genetic alterations that lead to most cancers arise in the DNA of a somatic cell during the lifetime of the affected individual. Because of these genetic changes, cancer cells proliferate uncontrollably, producing malignant tumors that invade surrounding healthy tissue (Karp, 1999).

Because of its impact on human health and the hope that a cure might be developed, cancer has been the focus of a massive research effort for decades. Cancer researchers have been working for many years to develop more effective and less debilitating treatments. Current treatments, such as chemotherapy and radiation, lack the specificity needed to kill cancer cells without simultaneously damaging normal cell, as evidenced by the serious side effects that accompany these treatments (Karp, 1999).

### **2.3.1 The Biology of Cancer**

At the cellular level, the most important characteristic of a cancer cell is its loss of growth control. When malignant cells or so-called neoplasm in the scientific or medical term are cultured on a culture dish under a limited growth factor condition, they continue to grow, piling on top of one another to form clumps (Albert, 1989). Malignant cells escape from many of the normal homeostatic mechanisms that control proliferation (Goodman



1994). Transformation of normal cells to neoplasm cells may be triggered by several factors, including chemical exposure, viruses and radiation. This showed that malignant cells are not responsive to the types of regulatory signals that cause their normal counterparts to cease growth and division. Uncontrolled growth combined with the tendency to become metastatic makes malignant cells the deadly threat that they are.

### **2.3.2 Classification of Tumors**

Generally there are two kinds of tumors benign and malignant. Benign tumor is a tumor composed of cells that are no longer responsive to normal growth controls, but that lack the capability to invade normal tissues or metastasize to distant sites whereas malignant tumors often spread to neighboring tissues and even other parts of the body (Albert, 1989).

### **2.3.3 The Genetics of Cancer**

Whenever cells of cancerous tumor are genetically scrutinized, they are invariable found to have arisen from a single cell. Cancer results from the uncontrolled proliferation of a single wayward cell (cancer is said to be monoclonal). Malignant transformation requires more than a single genetic alteration. The development of a malignant tumor is a multistep process characterized by a progression of genetic alterations in a single line of cells that makes the cells increasingly less responsive to the body's normal regulatory machinery and able to invade normal tissues (Karp, 1999).